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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
Wednesday, March 18, 2016

Running it Forward for Veterans: 7 MARATHONS in 7 DAYS

Eva Casale to Run Marathon Honoring Brentwood High School Graduates & Islip Residents Killed in Action

Brentwood High Students & Faculty, Legislator Martinez & Suffolk Federal Join Casale In Ceremony to Lay Wreath at Memorial for Four Servicemen

Tuesday, March 29, 2016, Brentwood – Between April 2 – 8, Suffolk Federal Vice President of Information Technology and marathoner, Eva Casale will run seven marathons in seven days to honor the 24 members of the military from Suffolk County who have been killed in action in Iraq and Afghanistan since 2003. Each of the seven days will be linked to communities these servicemen called home that are served by Suffolk Federal, who is sponsoring the series.

On Day Three, Monday, April 4, Ms. Casale will run to honor eight servicemen from the Town of Islip, four who graduated from Brentwood High School. Her nearly 30-mile marathon will take her past the high school where she will stop to participate with students and faculty in a wreath laying ceremony in memory of the four Brentwood High School graduates: Army Cpl. Raheen Tyson Heighter, Army Specialist Jose L. Ruiz, Army Michael Esposito, and Marine Lance Cpl. Ramon Mateo.

With this extraordinary feat, Ms. Casale will raise critical funds for [Hope for the Warriors](#), an organization that provides comprehensive support programs for service members, veterans, 9/11 first responders, caregivers and military families.

Sponsored by Suffolk Federal, Eva and her supporters, Team E.V.A., will run 184 miles in seven days, April 2 – 8, dedicating each day to a specific group of Long Island servicemen. For a \$50 donation, supporters are invited to run with Eva for the last seven miles of each or any of the seven day journey.

Information about each of the seven runs, including maps and street routes, are available on www.GoTeamEVA.org. All participants will receive a commemorative T-shirt and medal.

"Suffolk County recognizes the immense courage and resilience of our veterans. Eva Casale's historic run of seven marathons in seven days further strengthens the commitment to honor those Suffolk residents who gave the ultimate sacrifice to maintain our rights and freedoms as a free country and should serve as a reminder of our responsibility to care for those returning home as well as it should inspire us to continue Eva's great work in our communities," stated Legislator Monica R. Martinez.

"My son's service and sacrifice has changed my life. I understand now the price of freedom. I applaud Eva for finding a way to demonstrate her respect for the servicemen who made the ultimate sacrifice," said Cathy Heigher, mother of Cpl Raheen Tyson Heigher, the first Long Island serviceman to be killed in action in Iraq in 2003.

"We love that our sons and daughters are remembered and honored for their service and sacrifice. No parent wants their child to be forgotten, so we are grateful and appreciative to Eva for going out and running to honor and celebrate their lives," said Michele McNaughton, President of the Department of New York State and Northfork, #61 Long Island, American Gold Star Mothers, and the mother of Army SSG James D. McNaughton killed in action 02 August 2005, Baghdad, Iraq.

Ask Ms. Casale why she chose Hope for Warriors and she will tell you that E.V.A stands for Every Veteran Appreciated. "I wanted to put my passion for running to work for veterans. The sole purpose of Hope for the Warriors is to help those touched by military service to succeed here at home. The programs they offer post-9/11 active duty and reserve service members, veterans, military caregivers and families of the fallen are making a tangible difference in people's lives."

"Suffolk County is home to more veterans than any county in New York State, and more than most other counties in the entire nation," said Suffolk Federal CEO William O'Brien. "Many of our members are veterans or have family members in the military. We are honored to be the lead sponsor for one of our own and support Eva in her mission, not just to raise funds, but to bring attention to the needs of these brave men and women and their families who sacrifice so much." He added, "Eva will be running each marathon in the communities of a Suffolk Federal branch. We invite our members and the extended community to join us in April as we cheer on Team E.V.A. in her seven day journey."

Eva has been a runner since high school and has run 57 full marathons and 34 ultra-marathons. Since deciding ten years ago to pair her passion for running with support for charitable organizations, Eva has raised more than \$150,000 for charity, including the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society.

"Eva Casale is an amazing person who is always choosing to give her time to support worthy causes," said County Executive Steve Bellone. "Eva came to my attention last year when she ran from Manhattan to Montauk to raise funds for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. Once again, Eva answers the call and is now raising funds for Hope for the Warriors through her 'seven marathons in seven days' commitment. I thank Eva and the members of Team E.V.A. for their continued charitable efforts to help change the lives of individuals."

"I offer my deepest thanks to Eva Casale for her dedication to our veterans, 9/11 volunteers, military caregivers, and the families of the fallen," said Suffolk County Legislature Presiding Officer DuWayne Gregory. "By dedicating all monies raised as Eva completes seven marathons in seven days in seven different Suffolk communities to Hope for the Warriors, she is giving real,



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tangible support to the brave men and women who have served our nation so selflessly. Thank you Eva.”

“Individual efforts that support our organization—efforts like this extraordinary series of seven marathons that Eva Casale will be running in April—are vital to our ability to serve post-9/11 service members,” said Steve Bartolmioli, Director, Hope for the Warriors. “We are grateful to Eva, and to Suffolk Federal, for supporting our veterans in need.”

A Call to Action to Join Team EVA in Supporting Veterans

As lead sponsor, Suffolk Federal has already made a commitment to Hope for the Warriors on behalf of this effort. The public can join the cause too by stopping in at any Suffolk Federal branch **between Monday, February 29 and Saturday, March 26** to donate. For a \$10 donation, donors can take home a special beanie bear while contributing to Team E.V.A. and Hope for the Warriors. For a \$5 donation, they will receive a Team EVA bracelet and magnet.

For more information, visit www.suffolkfcu.org/events today.

*Suffolk Federal Credit Union is a not-for-profit financial cooperative chartered in 1967 by the National Credit Union Administration (NCUA). It is member-owned and governed by a volunteer board of directors. The credit union has assets in excess of \$975 million, eight retail branches, and over 54,000 members. Suffolk Federal is a full service financial institution with low-cost products and services, and a history of providing **Better Banking for Long Island**. It is open to anyone who lives, works or worships in Suffolk County.*

About Hope for the Warriors

Hope For The Warriors was founded aboard Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, in North Carolina, in 2006 as its founders witnessed, firsthand, the effects of war on families and communities. For the past 10 years, Hope for the Warriors has been dedicated to serving those who have served. We provide a full cycle of care to restore self, family, and hope to post-9/11 service members, their families, and families of the fallen. Our programs are aimed at providing services to these post-9/11 service members in three main categories: *Transition Services* which supports the career, educational, and personal goals of service members, veterans, and their family members as they experience the many military transitions; *Clinical Health & Wellness* which provides a holistic, person-centered approach in addressing the physical, psychological, social, moral, and environmental needs of the service member, their family, and families of the fallen; and *Sports & Recreation* which reintroduces a loved sport or hobby with an emphasis on organic healing, or gives the opportunity to gain new skills with the use of adaptive equipment to assist in physical and psychological recovery.